

REMARKS

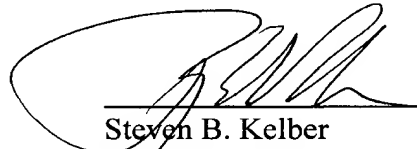
Claims 1-29 are currently pending in the above referenced application. Responsive to an Examiner's Restriction Requirement, Applicant has concurrently submitted herewith a Response electing with traverse the claims of Group II.

By the above amendment to Claim 27, Applicant has included Claim 27-29 as depending from and further defining the method of Claim 16 such that Claims 27-29, as amended now fall within the defined Group II.

Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for examination on the merits. Early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS

27. (Amended) A method as in Claim 16, further comprising: [for repairing a damaged heart valve of a beating heart, comprising the steps of:

inserting a valved port in a chamber wall of the beating heart to access an interior of a heart chamber;]

inserting a stapling device through the lumen of the [valved] port; and

positioning staples from the stapling device into at least a portion of the mitral valve annulus of a [the] damaged heart valve to reduce a length of the portion of the mitral valve annulus.